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## NEW CENSUS DATA REVEAL THE UNEVEN IMPACT THE RECESSION HAS HAD ON THE DISTRICT

By Jenny Reed

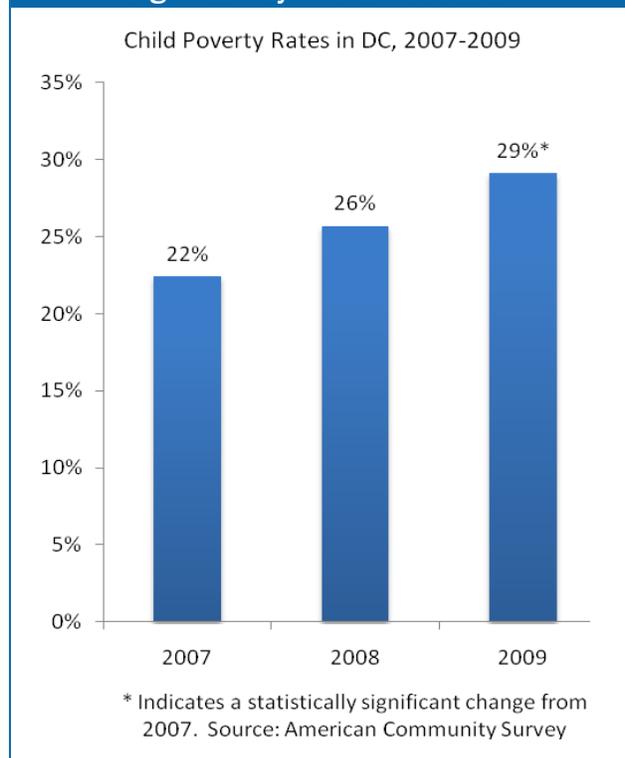
The national recession has had a disparate impact across the District, according to data released today by the U.S. Census Bureau. Poverty increased modestly for the city as a whole – the change was not statistically significant due to a large margin of error – but poverty rates have jumped sharply for some groups, particularly children, Black residents, and those living east of the Anacostia River. The new Census data also show that median household income rose by \$3,000 in the District from 2007 to 2009. (The income change from 2008 to 2009 was not statistically significant.) The growth in poverty for some groups amidst overall increases in incomes suggests that the recession is hitting some groups in DC harder than others.

The share of DC residents living in poverty – with incomes below \$22,000 for a family of four — rose from 17.6 percent in 2008 to 18.4 percent in 2009, an increase that was not statistically significant. ) Median household income rose from \$56,190 in 2007 to \$59,290, adjusting for inflation to equal 2009 dollars.

A closer look at the numbers reveals that while poverty has not increased substantially for the city as a whole, it has jumped sharply for certain groups.

- **More than one in four children in DC lives in poverty.** The child poverty rate rose from just over 22 percent to 29 percent between 2007 and 2009. This represents the largest change in poverty rates among any group in the District since the start of the recession.
- **The number of residents living in deep poverty has risen.** The number of residents living in deep poverty — meaning they live below *half* of the poverty line, or just under \$11,000 for a family of four — rose from 8 percent in 2007 to 11 percent in 2009. Over 1 in 10 DC residents – 61,128 – are living on less than half of the poverty line. This represents an increase of 14,000 residents living in deep poverty from 2007.

**FIGURE 1: Child Poverty Rates have Risen Significantly in the Recession**

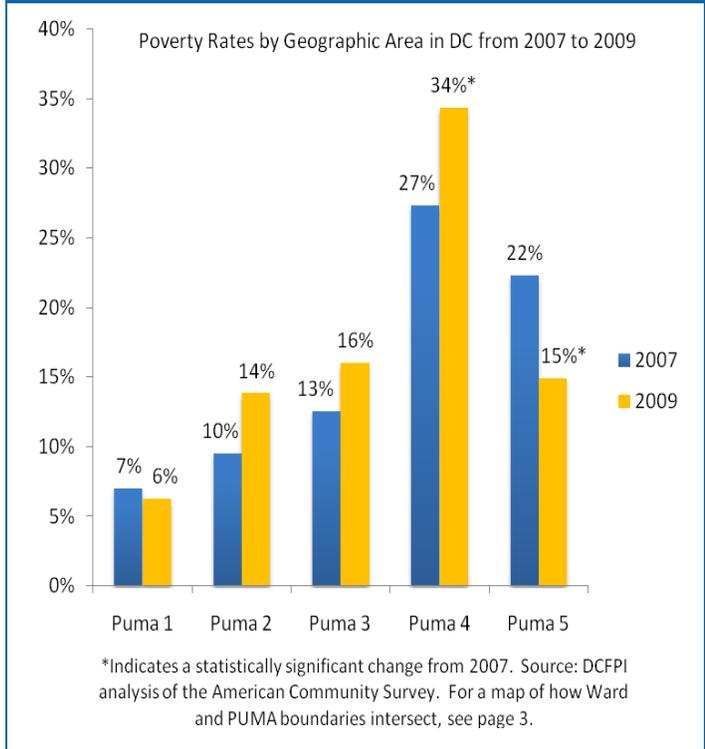


- **More than one in four Black residents live below the poverty line.** The poverty rate among Blacks rose from 23 percent in 2007 to 27 percent in 2009. Poverty among black residents is more than three times the poverty rates for White, non-Hispanic residents and more than two and half times the poverty rates for Hispanic residents.

- **One in three residents east of the River lives in poverty.** The poverty rate for residents living in Wards 7 and 8 grew from 27 percent in 2007 to 34 percent in 2009. (The Census does not have results available by individual ward, but instead breaks down findings into five Public Use Micro Areas, also referred to as PUMA's.) The area that encompasses most of Ward 2 and some of Ward 6 and Ward 1 saw the largest drop in poverty from 22 percent in 2007 to 15 percent in 2009. Poverty rates in other parts of the city were virtually unchanged.

- **One in four residents with a high school diploma lives in poverty.** Among residents with a high school diploma or GED, poverty increased from 20 percent in 2007 to 25 percent in 2009. Changes in poverty for other residents at other education levels were not statistically significant.

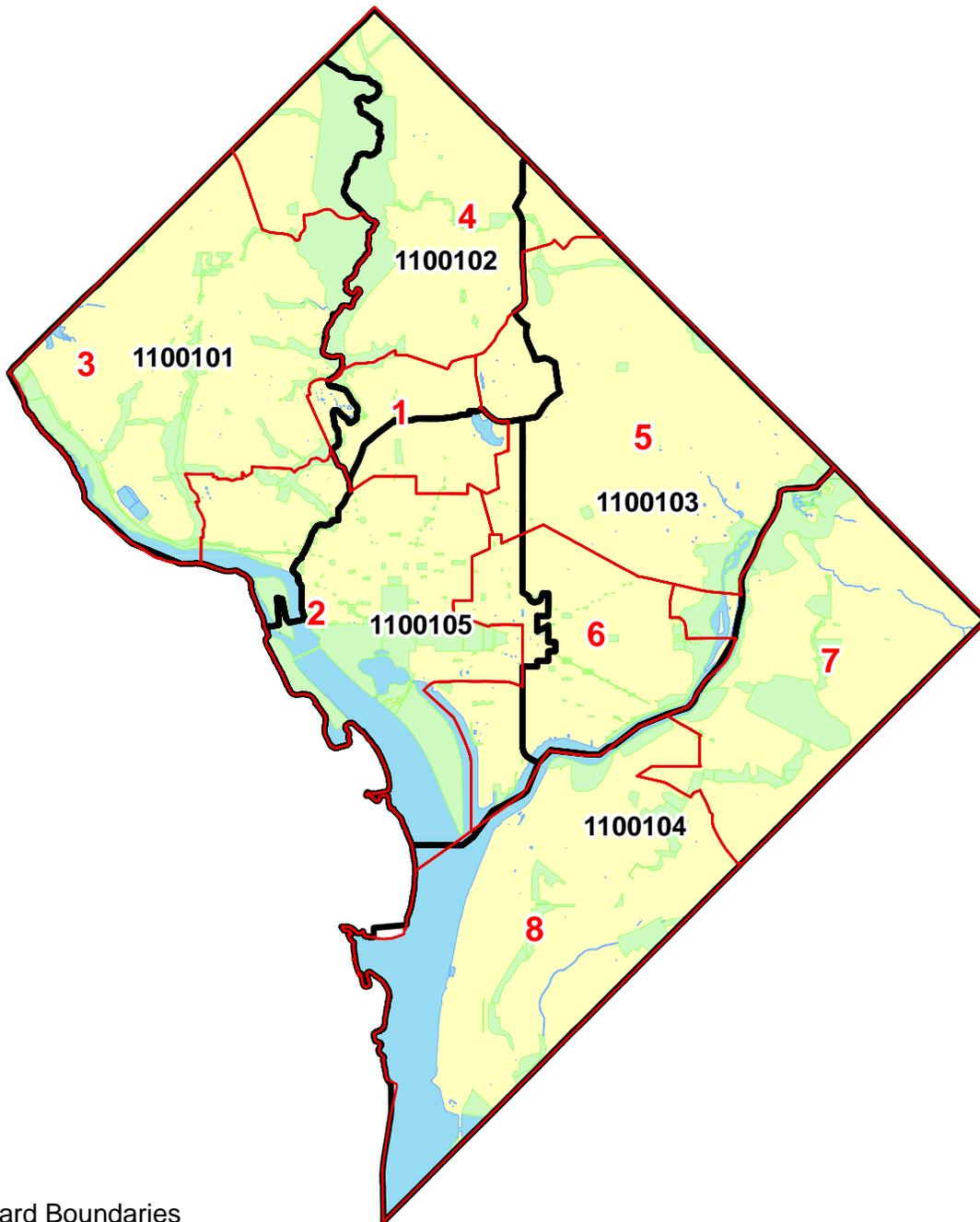
**FIGURE 2: Poverty Rates Rose Significantly East of the River**



The new Census data show that median household income – the income representing the middle of DC’s income distribution – has increased in DC, but the gains were confined to one part of the city. District-wide, median incomes rose from \$56,190 in 2007 to \$59,290. However, the most significant income gains were made largely in an area comprising Wards 2, western parts of 6 and the southern half of Ward 1 (defined by the Census as “PUMA 5”). Median household income in this area rose from \$60,000 in 2007 to \$74,000 in 2009. In other areas of the city, incomes fell or remained stable. East of the River, median household income dropped from \$32,100 in 2007 to \$30,700 in 2009, adjusting for inflation. Incomes also fell in the upper Northwest DC area largely made up of Ward 3.

- **The new Census data show that incomes are likely to be falling for DC residents with a high school diploma or less.** From 2007 to 2009, median earnings for adults with less than a high school diploma fell from \$23,300 to \$20,400. Those with a high school diploma or GED also saw a decline in earnings, from \$29,000 in 2008 to \$26,200 in 2009. Earnings remained virtually unchanged for those with some college or beyond. The drop in earnings for residents with no college education is likely to have resulted in a drop in total incomes for their households.

# District of Columbia Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMA) (2000) and Wards (2002)



-  Ward Boundaries
-  PUMA Boundaries

Source: NeighborhoodInfo DC  
Created: July 25, 2008

